An end-run by state on 751 project

The Herald-Sun (Durham, N.C.)

June 29, 2012 Friday

Section: LOCAL NEWS; A; Pg. 8

Length: 443 words

Body

In its short life, the ***751*** South ***project*** has already had a history full of twists and turns. The latest is Tuesday's decision by members of the North Carolina House to have their say.

Durham County Commissioners approved the 167-acre ***project*** site in 2010. The commissioners have given the developers, Southern Durham Development Inc., permission to place up to 1,300 homes and 600,000 square feet of commercial space on the site, which is located near Jordan Lake in southwest Durham County.

Opponents have expressed concerns about runoff affecting the lake, thanks to impervious surfaces; about environmental, sprawl, congestion, and population-density issues; and about other matters. Foes were especially incensed that a super PAC, the Durham Partnership for Progress, was established to back candidates for the commission who are favorable to the ***751*** South development.

Whatever one might think of political action committees, they are a legal part of the electoral process, and in fact anti-***751*** candidates ***ended*** up finishing in the top three positions in the recent commissioner election. But ***state*** legislators acting to subvert local decisions on an issue as important as a major subdivision development is a different sort of issue entirely.

The controversy this time is over water and sewer connections for the ***751*** ***project***. On Feb. 20, the City Council refused to allow the ***project*** an extension to the city's utility network. The site at the intersection of site at the intersection of N.C. ***751*** and Fayetteville Road would only be able to obtain county services, which include sewer but not water; local officials were skeptical of developer plans to drill wells.

But now, the N.C. House voted to force the city to supply water and sewer services to the ***project***, despite the efforts of Durham House representatives to oppose the move. The legislation is currently pending in the Senate. While senators rejected the House version of the legislation, it may still have life in conference committee.

Rep. Winkie Wilkins, D-Person, called this week's maneuvering "legislative meddling to the highest degree."

That it is.

Rep. Tim Moore, R-Cleveland, said he was reacting to information from former ***state*** Sen. Cal Cunningham, attorney for the ***751*** developers, when he sponsored the legislation in question.

No matter how people might feel about the ***751*** development, this is simply wrong. Legislators say they view this issue as a broader one, that municipalities should be limited in their power to deny utilities to land near their borders. What it boils down to is that the ***state*** is usurping the power of cities to determine how and in what manner they want to grow.

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: LEGISLATIVE BODIES (90%); LEGISLATION (89%); US ***STATE*** GOVERNMENT (89%); COUNTIES (89%); PENDING LEGISLATION (78%); POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES (77%); ELECTIONS (77%); REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT (77%); REGIONAL & LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (77%); COUNTY GOVERNMENT (77%); POPULATION DENSITY (76%); LAKES (75%); CITY LIFE (75%); ELECTION LAW (75%); RUNOFF ELECTIONS (75%); POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS (74%); APPROVALS (72%); WATER SUPPLY UTILITIES (72%); CITIES (70%); CITY GOVERNMENT (70%); CAMPAIGN FINANCE (69%)

Industry: REAL ESTATE (78%); REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT (77%); (77%); LAND SUBDIVISION (76%); WATER SUPPLY UTILITIES (72%); COMMERCIAL PROPERTY (71%); UTILITIES INDUSTRY (71%); WATER & WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT (70%)

Geographic: DURHAM, NC, USA (90%); NORTH CAROLINA, USA (79%)

Load-Date: June 30, 2012

End of Document